ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN STUDIES

SUPPLEMENT 36

CERAMICS OF THE PHOENICIAN-PUNIC WORLD: COLLECTED ESSAYS

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THE STRAIT AND BEYOND: LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN PHOENICIAN LIXUS (LARACHE, MOROCCO)

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INTRODUCTION

The Phoenician presence in Morocco has long been focused on Lixus. It is a quite well known site because it is mentioned in classical texts as one of the first three western Phoenician foundations, along with Utica and Gadir (Plin., XIX, 63). Lixus is also cited as a geographical reference in the Atlantic nautical itineraries (Ps. Scylax, Periplus, 112, 2; Hanno), and as a mythical place (Plin., V, 31; Strab., XVII, 3, 8).

Regarding the early Phoenician settlement, scholars have usually made reference to the sanctuary — or to the altar — dedicated to Hercules-Melqart, supposedly on an island,[1] and to the pioneering excavations of Tarradell.[2] During the last few years, however, other Phoenician finds in Morocco have been identified on both the Atlantic and Mediterranean coasts,[3] and they actually show that the Phoenician presence offers parallels with the archaeological record of southern Spain (**Fig. 1**).

[1] López Pardo 1992a, p. 97; Manfredi 1996, pp. 48–56.
[2] Tarradell 1960.
[3] Aranegui 2001, p. 3.

Fig. 1. Main sites referred to in the text

Less attention, however, has been given to the fact that Phoenicians must have encountered and coped with indigenous North African communities, and that all these groups must have had relationships in wider networks within the Strait of Gibraltar. Little knowledge of Late Bronze Age communities from North Africa underlies such a biased scholarly approach.

The aim of this paper is, then, to present the pottery from the foundational levels of Lixus in order to better explore questions of the groups involved in this case of cultural contact. As far as our results are based on excavations located on the southern and the upper western hillside, we are concerned with a special case study that is partly provisional and changeable in future fieldwork. It is important, however, to show the evolution of the local and regional groups between the beginning of the eighth century BC and the seventh century BC. Thus, focusing on pottery and other material culture and on fresh data from other sites within the Strait and Portugal, we will draw a scenario in which complex networks of relationships and connections are addressed.

Our approach to the archaic levels of Lixus is based on an understanding of colonialism as a concrete cultural contact situation in which power relations constitute a central issue. Therefore, an understanding of the social and cultural processes previous to foundations of permanent settlements is necessary. Nonetheless, we have to be conscious of the limitations in dealing with this topic in north Morocco that prevents the attribution of some materials to the local tradition. Interaction between both sides of the Strait had occurred well before, as this area had maintained contacts with the Iberian Peninsula since the Chalcolithic period.[4]

We will pay attention to material culture and developments in terms of regional or local processes. The management of economical resources through the study of geomorphology, and carpological, anthracological, metallurgical and faunal remains in a wide sense, will be also taken into account. Indeed, the joint presence of hand-made pottery and flint chips for sickles contrasts with an agropecuarian context where advanced technology — complex buildings, wheel made pottery and iron tools — are recorded. We will consider those elements as evidences of local and regional groups that had lived in perishable constructions in an area of about 10 ha.

LIXUS AND THE PHOENICIANS IN THE FAR WEST

Understanding the initial human settlement in Lixus is fundamental for our goals. The location selected for the settlement of Lixus is quite typical of an archaic colonial foundation (**Fig. 2**). The site occupies a hill, which reaches 85 m.a.s.l., over the mouth of the Loukkos River and over a big estuary. As far as we know from other areas surrounding the Strait of Gibraltar in a large sense, this choice does contrast with the previous scenario, when permanent settlements situated near the coast were not common at all. We do know that the Atlantic estuaries in the Moroccan coast, bigger at those times[5] were actually spaces that could have been sailed. The Lixus estuary lagoon covered an extension between 2700 ha and 6000 ha and was 3 m in depth.[6] Furthermore, estuaries offered an adequate ecosystem for obtaining resources and prospecting the inland through the fluvial courses, where indigenous groups settled, frequently on the low courses.

After a first period where permanent constructions have not yet been recorded, the whole urban plan of Lixus habitation areas took place at the end of the eighth century BC or at the beginning of the seventh century BC. At that time, two different areas are clearly defined by our excavations; on the one hand, there are houses on the

[4] Souville 1983.
[5] Carmona 2001, pp. 9–13; Carmona 2005, pp. 5–11.
[6] Aranegui 2007, pp. 369–382.

Fig. 2. The situation of Lixus and the area covered by the ancient estuary *circa* 3000 BP.

southern and low slopes (Sondeo del Algarrobo), which are quite well connected to the lagoon. On the other hand, there are complex storage rooms on the upper part of the hill (Cámaras Montalbán) and, perhaps, an area of temples that is still poorly documented archaeologically.

Houses were built with local limestone, mudbricks and wood. Walls have bases around 0.5/0.6 m thick and one meter high. The dwellings are finely adapted to the topography of the slope by systems of high built terraces. From what we know in the Algarrobo region, they have four rooms — second floors have not been recorded — and the total area was about 100 m^2. At least one of the rooms was devoted to craft activities, which is quite common in other Phoenician settlements (Morro de

Mezquitilla, sa Caleta, Cerro del Villar).[7] In our case, a smelting bronze and copper furnace has been recorded, maybe to produce small cast objects.[8]

On the upper hill, buildings are rather different. They present thicker walls (one meter thick at least) and the layout is only partially known, but up to now we can say that they might have functioned as either storage rooms, which are divided in longitudinal naves,[9] or as religious constructions, following Ponsich's proposal.[10]

Fieldwork carried out in the region surrounding Lixus has provided more data towards a better understanding of the settlement for the later period, in the sixth century BC. For example, tombs in Raqqada, near the estuary lagoon, have been dug up by a Moroccan team during the last few years. Also remarkable is the discovery of red slip pottery and Phoenician amphorae in Azib Slaoui, a settlement on a hill by the Loukkos only 24 km away from Lixus.[11]

Regarding the general scenario in north Africa, both surveys and fieldwork carried out during the last twenty years shed some light on these matters, in spite of the fact that research and publications in north Morocco have been scarce.

Mogador, the ancient island of Kerné, situated 700 km to the south of Lixus on the Atlantic coast, is the other best known settlement with Phoenician pottery apart from Lixus. There are Phoenician type amphorae and red slip wares, but only a few sherds of hand made pottery have been recorded. These divergences with regard to Lixus can be explained not only by the chronological gap — Mogador is supposed to have been occupied around the seventh century BC — but also by different socioeconomic developments. Lixus was a permanent settlement, whereas Mogador has been defined as a seasonal settlement most likely occupied by seafarers.[12]

Of the area between Mogador and Lixus, we know almost nothing at all. On the mouth of Bou Regreg River, however, outside Chellah, archaic pottery (neither well defined nor published) has been found[13] and new excavations are taking place.

Moving to the Mediterranean coast, the relative lack of data is related to a simple lack of fieldwork because Sidi Abdeslam del Behar and Kach Kouch, in the valley of Laou River, were the only sites known up until the last decade. But things are now in the process of change because surveys carried out by a Moroccan-Italian team along the Rif Mountains and on the coast have identified Phoenician materials. To the east of Melilla, in the valley of Molouya River, amphorae 10.1.2.1, in Ramon's typology,[14]

[7] Schubart 1999; Ramon 2007; Aubet, *et al.* 1999; Delgado, *et al.*, forthcoming.

[8] Puig Moragón 2005, p. 180.

[9] Yadin 1972, pp. 167–169.

[10] Ponsich 1981. We do not follow the religious interpretation for this group of buildings of Ponsich. Instead, a palatial complex has been interpreted for this construction. See Aranegui and Mar 2009.

[11] Akerraz and El Khayari 2000, pp. 1651–1657; El Khayari 2007.

[12] Jodin 1966; López Pardo 1992b and 1996.

[13] López Pardo 2002, p. 32.

[14] Ramon 1995. In this paper we will follow this typology in the consideration of the western Phoenician amphorae.

painted pottery and red slip ware have been recorded. To the west, on the right side of the mouth of Amekrane River, the settlement of Sidi Driss has also provided amphorae, painted and grey pottery, red slip and ware and hand made pottery.[15] Finally the city of Ceuta has provided fresh data from levels dated from seventh century BC.[16]

THE POTTERY FROM THE INITIAL LEVELS

Levels and Quantifications

We will consider the pottery from the earliest levels in order to investigate closely technological and functional aspects. The layers considered belong to two different areas where our research has been conducted since 1995: one on the south slope (1995–2003) and the other on the top of the hill, in the area called Cámaras Montalbán (2005–2009). Older excavations, however, conducted in several parts of the city by Tarradell (1948–1957) will also be considered.[17] It is important to stress that both hand made and wheel made pottery are always recorded altogether in every single area where these first layers have been reached.

We have pointed out that the first evidence of occupation on the *Choumis* — the local word referring to the hill of Lixus — are damp muddy layers of around one meter high on average deposited on the geological rock of the hill. They can be considered midden deposits that have provided not only a huge amount of pottery, but also organic remains such as bones, charcoals, seeds, ichthyofaunal and shells, which are the basis for our palaeoenvironmental analysis.[18] Furthermore, up to now there is no evidence of any building or construction associated to these layers.

Two radiocarbon dates have been obtained from the initial levels (Beta Analytic: 2590 ± 40 BP; 2540 ± 40 BP). The calibrated date for the first one offers a range between 820 and 770 cal BC, which is maintained by the typological study of the red slip pottery.[19] On the whole, this evidence refutes the idea that this area was subsidiary from the south of Spain in terms of the chronology of the Phoenician arrival.

Taking into account quantifications of all layers from both the south slope and Cámaras Montalbán,[20] the wheel made pottery appears to be slightly more numerous, as 60 percent of the pottery is wheel made whereas the rest (40 percent) is hand made, the number of minimum vessels inventoried is 634. There are few changes in these

[15] Kbiri Alaoui, *et al.* 2004.
[16] Tarradell 1960, p. 86; Bokbot and Onrubia-Pintado 1995, pp. 222–223; Villada, *et al.* 2007.
[17] Belén, *et al.* 1996 and 2001.
[18] Grau, *et al.* 2001.
[19] Aranegui 2005, p. 272.
[20] The sherds have been recounted on the basis of the minimum number of vessels, which has been detailed in former publications: Aranegui 2001, p. 37.

quantifications if we regard separately these two areas: the south slope provides a 52 percent of wheel made pottery (289 minimum vessels), while in the Cámaras Montalbán area their presence increases a little bit more, as 61 percent is wheel made pottery, the rest is obviously hand made pottery (345 minimum vessels).

There are rather considerable variations in the tally, however, if we try more precise combinations selecting concrete stratigraphic units (*unité stratigraphique*, hereafter US). Thus, US 1154 and 1168 (Cámaras Montalbán area), where most eighth century BC pottery has been recorded, provide similar percentages to those shown up to now: 65 percent of wheel made pottery and 35 percent of hand made (among 297 of total vessels). The panorama appears to be the other way around, however, if we consider all US from Sectors 2 and 3 from Algarrobo, on the south slope: 59 percent of the pottery is hand made (among a total number of vessels of 71) whereas the rest (41 percent) is wheel made pottery.

Finally, US 1126 and 1127 from Cámaras Montalbán area have provided a different scenario: here only 10 percent is wheel made pottery (two vessels), whereas 90 percent is hand made (19 vessels). More considerations on these layers will be given below.

Description of Pottery

Our classification has followed at first, a technological distinction between wheel made and hand made pottery. Then, observations have been made focusing on typological features. Wheel made pottery (380 minimum vessels) provides types that are well recorded and studied in other settlements from south Iberia: red slip ware (60 percent), plain ware (30 percent), painted ware (7 percent) and grey ware (3 percent). Unfortunately, we do not know definitively areas of production for these items, as archaeometric analyses of fabrics have not been conducted up to now. As a matter of interest, in Ceuta almost all the pottery from the seventh century BC has been identified as an eastern Andalusia production.[21]

Red slip ware is mainly represented by open forms such as plates and bowls (85 percent of the types), whereas other types, jugs and oil lamps, clearly form a minority in these layers. Red slip from Lixus is, in general, of a good quality. The slip is brownish and reddish in hue, occasionally pale, and it is homogeneously smoothed, even burnished. There are obvious variations in both qualities and surface treatments, however, the best qualities are found in sherds from trefoil-rimmed and *bobèche* rim (or mushroom-topped) jugs; reserved surfaces are always well smoothed. Fabrics are of a fine quality, of high and medium hardness, and pale brown or beige colour; a black or grey central layer is commonly found. Inclusions in fabrics are fine and scarce. It is

[21] Villada, *et al.* 2007, p. 132.

worth noting that golden mica inclusions are occasionally found, although these inclusions are much more frequent in hand made pottery.[22]

Plates are relatively homogeneous in the early layers (**Fig. 3**). The width of the rim varies considerably, but the Schubart index has been determined as 9.1, and the average width of the rim is 3.1 cm.[23] Following the chronological series established by Schubart[24] for red slip plates, the early layers of Lixus in the Algarrobo area have been dated around the middle of the eighth century BC.[25] Interestingly, a C_{14} date obtained from a seed from the same levels in 2002 (US 3049) provide a similar chronology, Cal BC 820–770.[26]

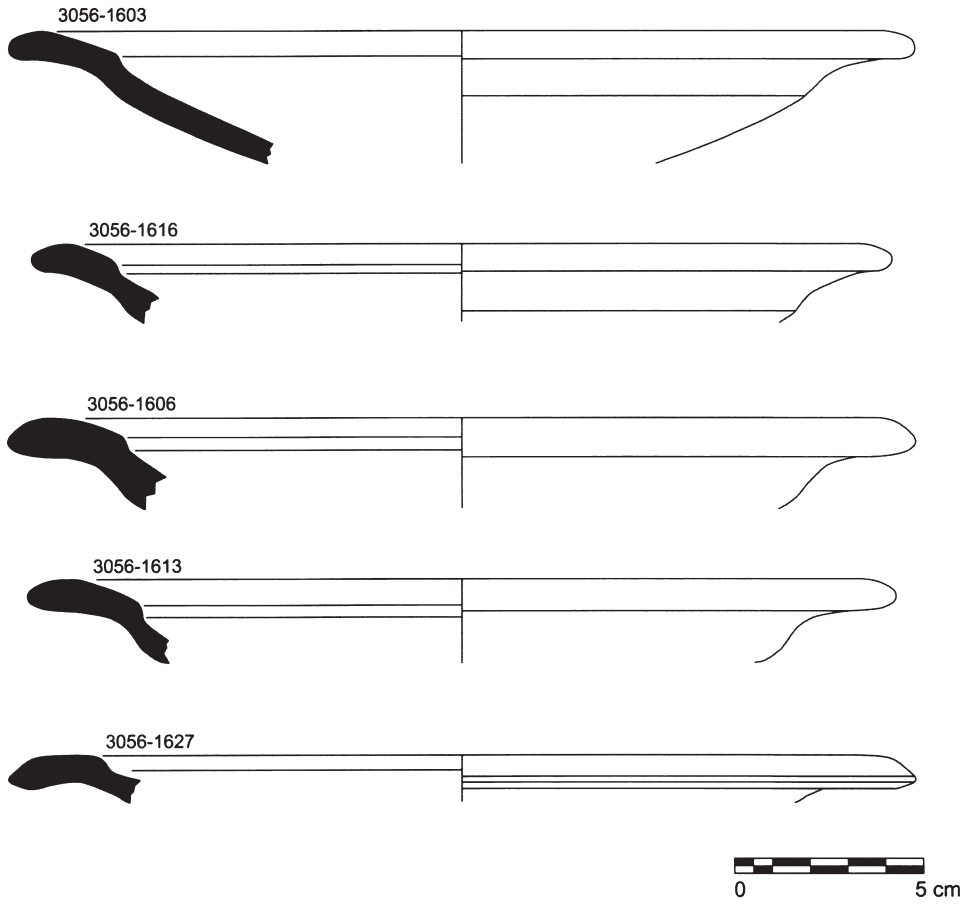

Fig. 3. Red slip plates from the excavations on the south slope of Lixus.

[22] Interestingly not only the hand made pottery from Lixus has golden mica, but also it is included in the hand made pottery from archaic Ceuta (Villada, *et al.* 2007, p. 131).

[23] See measures in Álvarez, *et al.* 2001, p. 73; and Álvarez and Gómez Bellard 2005, p. 163; see also Habibi 1992, p. 153.

[24] Schubart 1976.

[25] Álvarez, *et al.* 2001, p. 73.

[26] Álvarez and Gómez Bellard 2005, p. 178.

It has been suggested that the production of these plates closely follows eastern types, without considerable typological differences among western areas in early contexts. Furthermore, a local production has been proposed for Carthage and Sulcis on the basis of archaeometric analysis,[27] although the pottery considered here cannot be assigned to either one of these areas or to a local one.

Bowls and cups constitute the second group of red slip items in terms of quantity (**Fig. 4**). Among those, carinated bowls are the dominant form. They are usually 20/24 cm in diameter although there are other smaller examples that are about 10–12 cm in diameter. Their lips are slightly externally thickened forming a triangular-like shape in section, and they may be rounded or flattened. Exterior carination occurs always in the upper part of the profile, and it is usually quite pronounced while the interior carination is less marked.

Bowls with vertical or incurved rims are less common in Lixus, as they are in other Phoenician settlements in the western Mediterranean.[28] A characteristic slight carination is recorded in some bowls of this type, which does recall types of eastern origin.[29] The interior surface is usually entirely covered by red slip, which is frequently of a poorer quality than the other forms. The exterior surface is only covered with slip on the upper part of the bowl, the carination being the limit of the treatment applied.

Other red slip types are fairly scarce, as they constitute a 10 to15 percent among the red slip ware. Oil lamps — mostly found in plain ware — and jugs that are almost all of the *bobèche* rim form constitute another group of interest, although the extreme fragmentation of the pottery makes their identification difficult.

The plain ware is mainly represented by amphorae, types 10.1.1.1 and 10.1.2.1 (**Fig. 5**). Interestingly, there is no homogenous repertoire in terms of fabrics among the amphorae in these layers, hence the different fabrics might suggest imports from different production areas, as yet unknown.

Plates and big deep bowls are also found, together with bottles, storage jars and jugs, as in other archaic settlements of the western Mediterranean. Tripod-bowls, however, are absent from the first levels, and they only appear in Lixus in levels dated to the beginning of the seventh century BC.

Painted ware is almost non-existent in the initial levels. This fact, which was already pointed out in former publications[30] is confirmed by the 2005–2009 excavations.[31] Painted pottery in the eighth century BC levels is only represented by seven to ten percent of the total (US 1054 and 1168 from 2005–2009). It has also been noticed that there is an almost virtual absence of grey pottery in the earlier layers, because an

[27] Peserico 1999, p. 128.
[28] Álvarez and Gómez Bellard 2005, p. 162.
[29] See the carenated bowl type 1 in Peserico 1999, p. 129, and especially fig. 2d.
[30] Álvarez and Gómez Bellard 2005, p. 173, US 3049 and 3044.
[31] The report of the 2005–2009 excavations has been published. See Aranegui and Hassini 2010 for further details.

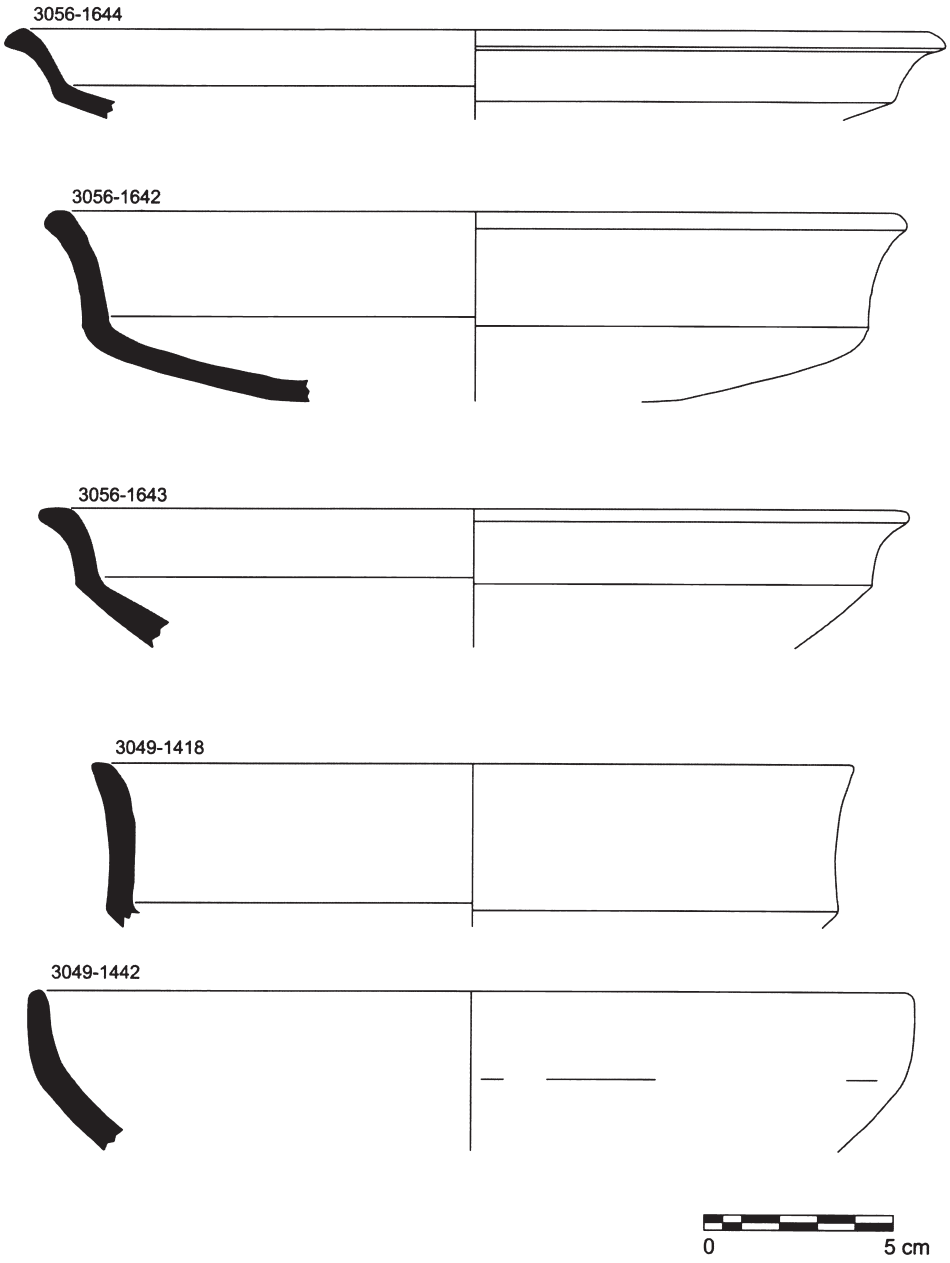

Fig. 4. Red slip bowls from the excavations on the south slope of Lixus.

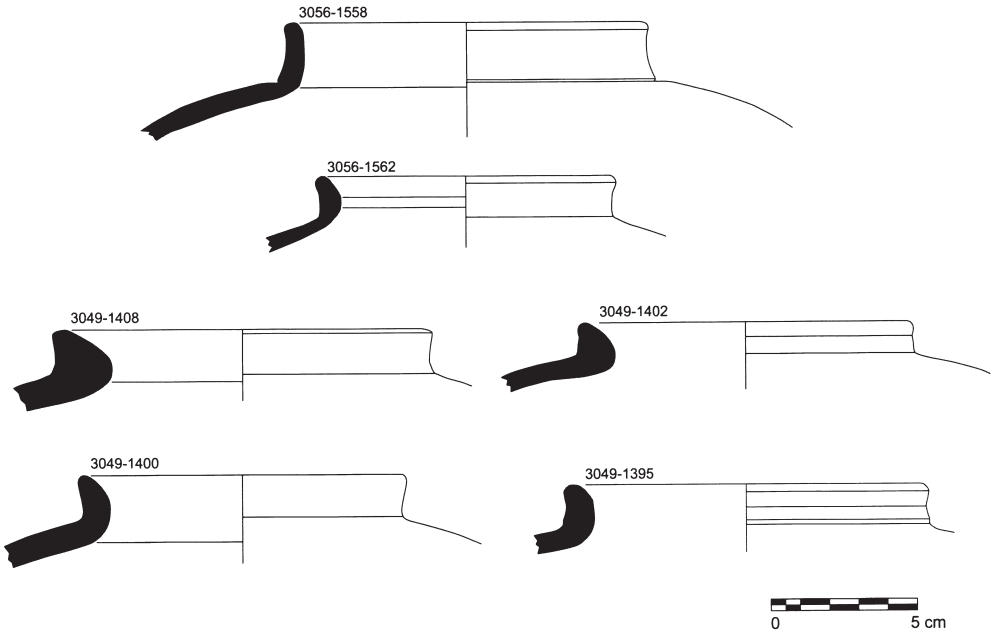

Fig. 5. Amphorae (10.1.1.1. and 10.1.2.1.) from the excavations on the south slope of Lixus.

anecdotal three percent of the total belongs to this category, which has been explained by an alternative use of hand made burnished bowls.[32]

The hand made pottery from Lixus is far from homogeneous. Three types have been differentiated according to their surface treatments: coarse ware, burnished pottery and incised decorated pottery (*cerámica esgrafiada*).[33] As we have pointed out, the presence of these pottery types varies between 40 percent and 60 percent among the total analysed. This is surprisingly high, but similar quantities are recorded in layers dated to the seventh century BC from Ceuta;[34] note that in eighth century BC Toscanos (Málaga), they reach only 18.4 percent.[35]

Parallels for these ceramics can be found in a number of sites in both north Africa and south Spain, but it is better to examine each, case by case, separately. The coarse ware belongs to cooking pottery, such as pots and pans. Their fabrics are brownish or greyish and the inclusions are usually big and abundant. Surfaces are rough and they are never smoothed. The most usual type is the cooking pot (**Figs 6**, 7 and **8**), which

[32] Álvarez, *et al.* 2001, p. 77.
[33] Gómez Bellard and Habibi 2001, p. 77; Álvarez and Gómez Bellard 2005, p. 173.
[34] Villada, *et al.* 2007, p. 131.
[35] Martín Ruiz 2000.

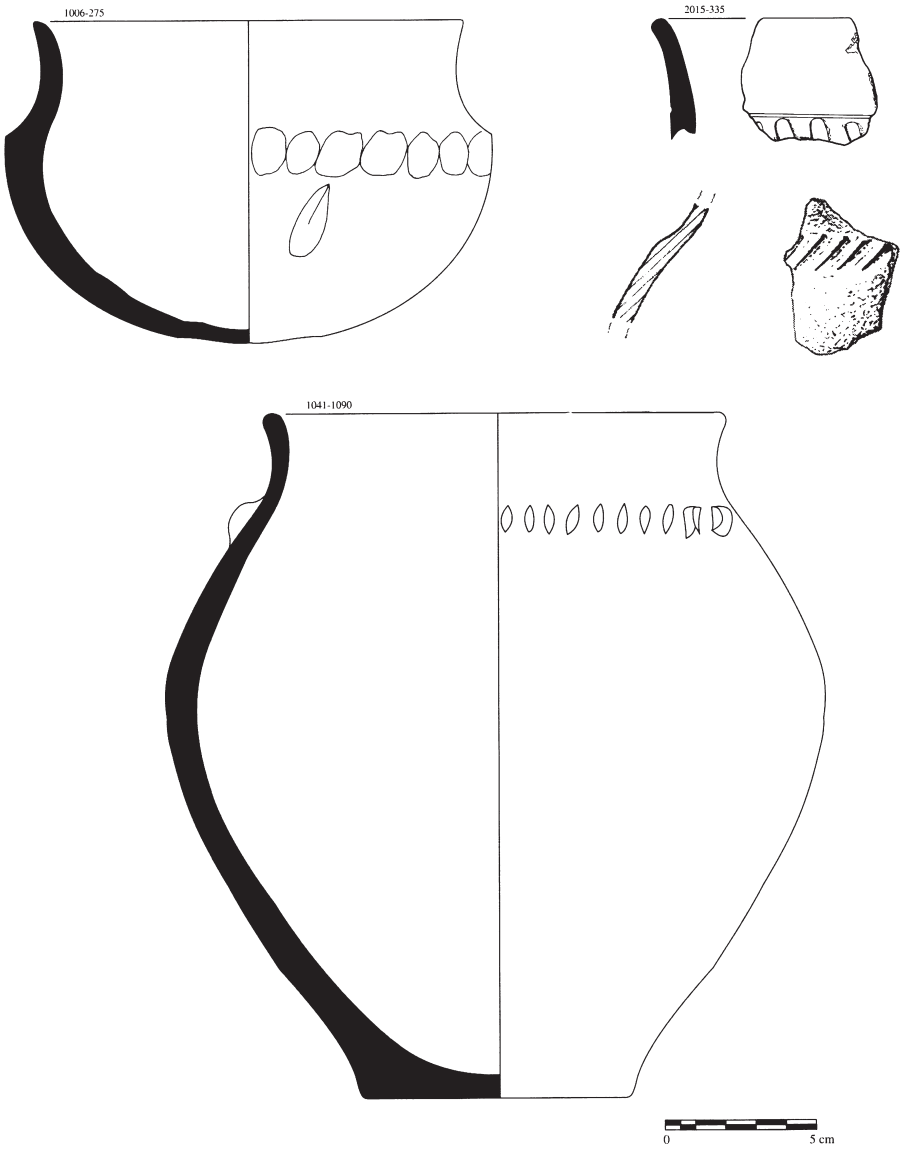

Fig. 6. Hand made cooking pots from the south slope of Lixus.

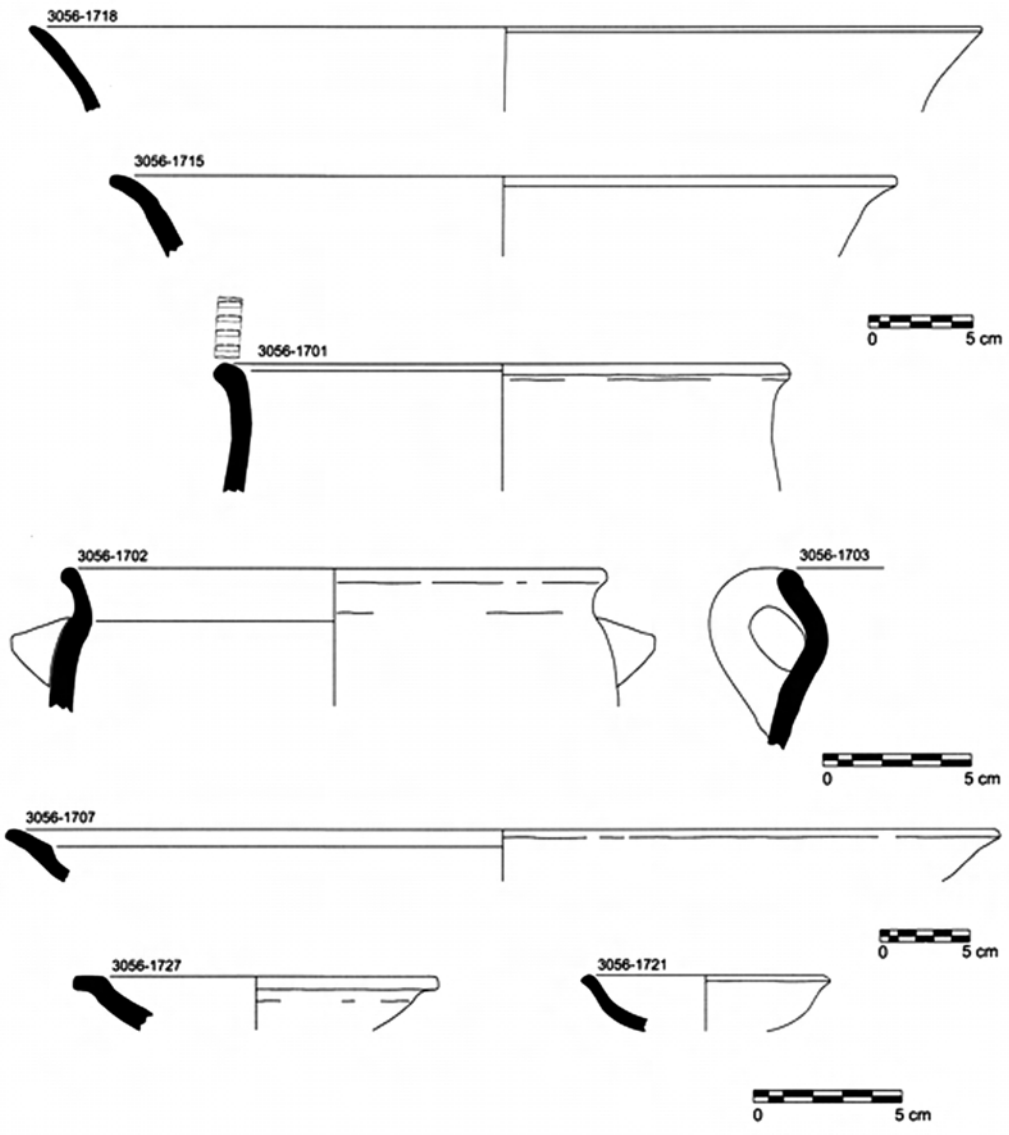

Fig. 7. Hand made coarse ware from the south slope of Lixus: bowls and cooking pots.

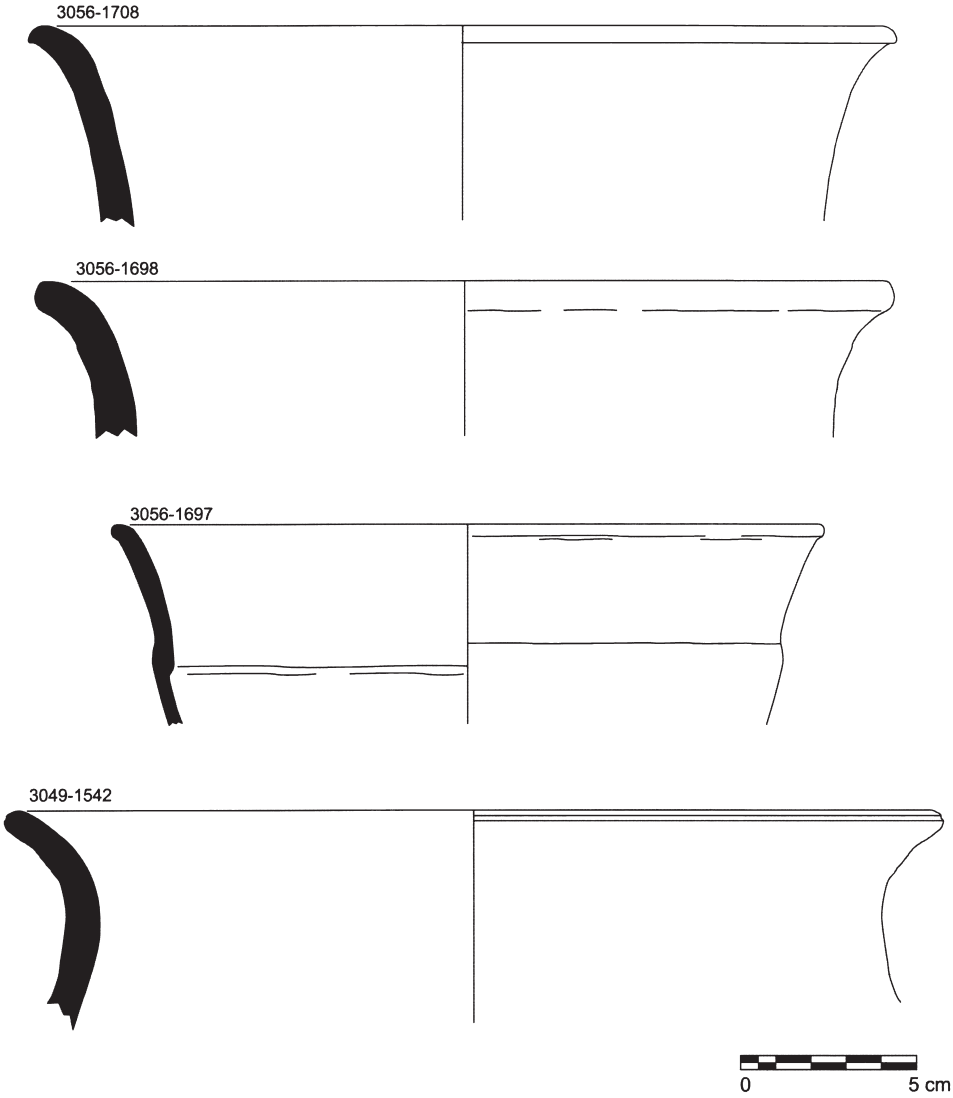

Fig. 8. Hand made pottery from the south slope of Lixus.

has homogeneous formal attributes: piriform or globular bodies, S-shaped profiles and short slightly open rims, thickened on the outside. The handles vary from small and simple prehensile attachments to handles with rounded sections. The upper part of the rims and the shoulders are usually decorated with short, incised perpendicular decorations made with small sticks (**Fig. 9**) and impressed patterns made with the fingertip; always made before firing. These decorations are also frequent on shallow casseroles.

Fragments of rims, thickened and flaring can be identified either as storage jars or cooking pots. And finally, wide shallow casseroles and bowls with surfaces slightly smoothed are recorded in these layers, too.

Coarse ware has been related to several sites from Doña Blanca (Cádiz), Toscanos and Huelva and even Mogador, due to its finger-impressed decoration.[36] Although, this does not provide many precise connections between areas because the simpler and plainer any material or motif is, the more frequent are the chances of finding it in any

Fig. 9. Hand made pottery with incised decorations, Lixus.

[36] López Pardo and Suárez Padilla 2002, p. 120.

archaeological record. A sherd from a hand made vessel decorated with short vertical incisions, however, has also been recorded in Sidi Driss, on the east Mediterranean coast of Morocco. The sherd is likely to be similar to sherds from Lixus decorated with incisions made with a small stick (**Fig. 9**).[37]

Burnished or carefully smoothed pottery (distinguishing these finishes is difficult in some cases) sways between 15 percent and 30 percent in these layers. This treatment is generally found in open forms, both on the outside and inside surfaces (**Fig. 10**). Bowls stand out as a good quality burnished pottery. Their shapes have a carination on the middle part, which becomes usually a little step in the inside of the profile; rims are usually thickened toward the outside.

Finally, incised (*à graffito*) pottery constitutes a small percentage (around one to five percent), but it provides us with a good deal of information, as we will see later on. Forms are usually open — *e.g.* bowls, but other close forms are also recorded — of a good quality in terms of fabrics, hardness and fine inclusions. The most outstanding feature is that they are decorated on the outside surface by light incisions made before firing, in horizontal patterns of geometric motifs such as triangles, draughtboards, diamonds and stripes, which we recorded in a variety of combinations (**Fig. 11**). This pottery, namely the open carinated bowls and some vessels with S-shaped profiles, have been related to hand made pottery from sites in Andalusia, especially from Huelva and Cádiz.[38] But it has been also found in other Mediterranean sites in levels from

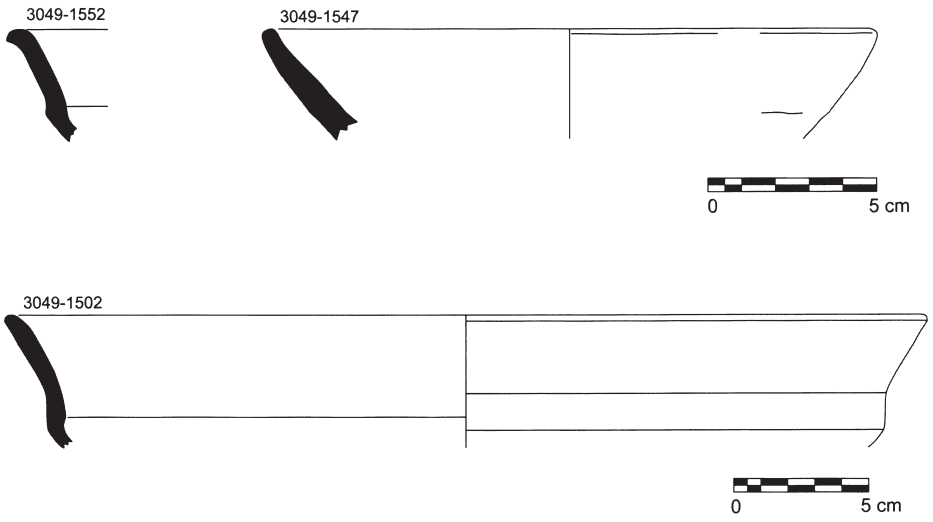

Fig. 10. Hand made burnished bowls from the south slope of Lixus.

[37] Kbiri Alaoui, *et al.* 2004, p. 596, and see also fig. 8, 3.
[38] Belén, *et al.* 1996, p. 342; Gómez Bellard and Habibi 2001, p. 80.

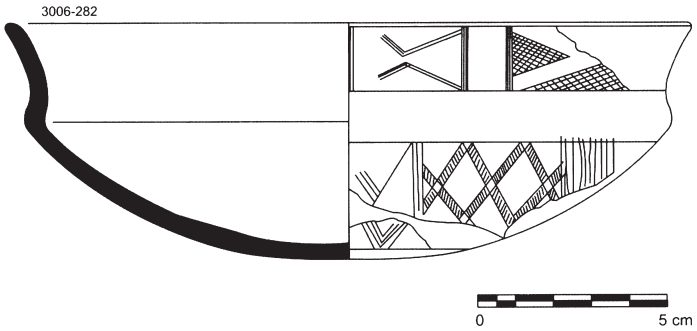

Fig. 11. Hand made incised pottery. South slope, Lixus.

eighth and seventh century BC, like Carthage, which has been explained in terms of exchanges, as they are carefully made vessels.[39] Mansel has pointed out, however, interesting differences between areas in pottery with incised decorations; south Spain and Morocco are more related to each other in terms of decorations and types of vessels, than Tunisia.[40] Sherds decorated *a graffito* are identical to those from Medina Sidonia and Las Cabezas de San Juan, both in Cádiz province.[41]

In considering these findings, other scholars had suggested that burnished bowls with thickened rims toward the inside might be more related to the eastern coast of Andalusia rather than the western one.[42] Furthermore, the fact that pottery with *retícula bruñida*, characteristic from indigenous settlements from Huelva, Sevilla and Cádiz, is not common in north Africa nor in eastern Andalusia, has lead these scholars to suggest close connections between Málaga and Granada with Lixus for the initial levels, rather than the Atlantic area.

However, these pottery types also appear in other sites in north Africa. For instance, in Kach Kouch, a site in the final stretch of the Laou River, on the Mediterranean coast, bowls with incised decoration have been recorded among other wheel made pottery, which are considered to follow Phoenician made tradition.[43]

Hybrid Pottery: Merging Know-How and Technologies

As a first approach to pottery, classification based on technology and surfaces treatments have proved to be useful. Other pottery types from the same layers, however,

[39] Mansel 2000, p. 171.
[40] Mansel 2000, p. 173.
[41] Escacena, *et al.* 1998, pp. 9–24.
[42] López Pardo and Suárez Padilla 2002, p. 122.
[43] Bokbot and Onrubia-Pintado 1992, p. 223.

do not fit perfectly well in these classifications because they embody technological and typological convergences; essentially borrowed know-how. These hybrid objects are most apparent by virtue of their technological features and surface treatments. Let us focus on these characteristics.

Hand made, open forms with red slip burnished surfaces are recorded. In layer 3056, on the south slope, six vessels have these treatments, which is 11 percent among the total number of hand made pottery (3056, nos 1746–1751). All of them are open forms, one plate and five bowls.

Moreover, from Cámaras Montalbán, on the upper hill, similar treatments have been recorded. One hand made bowl (1054A–112) and one plate (1168–71) with burnished surfaces have red painted treatments, although somewhat eroded. Finally, another hand made vessel — although undetermined in type — has red slip treatment (1126–2).

The painted red treatment is likely to be borrowed from wheel made ware. And interestingly, almost all of these hybrid forms are not connected typologically to wheel made Phoenician types (only the plate might relate to it), but are more akin to hand made ones. Regarding this matter it is worth noting that in recent excavations in Ceuta hand made pottery with reddish painted decoration has been also recorded from levels dated to the seventh century BC.[44]

Other examples of borrowed forms are hand made imitations of wheel made ware: a plate with wide rim (1054B–66), a carinated bowl (1054B–74), an oil lamp made of coarse ware (3056–1745) and another one with red paint (1170–10) are recorded.

Furthermore, borrowed technology can be detected in wheel made pottery, too. For instance, many scholars have suggested that grey pottery is evidence of wheel made production that reflects hand made indigenous typologies of bowls and plates.[45] In our levels grey pottery is very scarce, which contrasts with the records from south Spain, especially from western Andalusia and Portugal, where it is much more abundant in eighth century BC levels. The grey pottery comprises open bowls with rims thickened on the inside, which is a very frequent form in hand made burnished pottery.

SWAYING CERAMICS: HAND MADE POTS AND ETHNICITY

In our case study, what scholars have labelled "Phoenician Lixus" is materialised in the pottery presented above. It is clear that wheel made pottery appears in every initial level, but the most striking feature is the presence of a great variety of hand made pottery in every single area where the oldest levels have been dug up. Thus, the second

[44] Villada, *et al.* 2007, p. 131

[45] Roos 1982; and recently, see Vallejo 2005.

set of questions that emerges begins with which social groups are behind these pottery types? Can we keep labelling these layers Phoenician? Moreover, is *Phoenician* a single label? And then, what does *Phoenician* mean in each context?

Hand made pottery appears to be an increasingly interesting and tricky issue that has emerged over past years in the assessment of the Phoenician commercial diaspora in local contexts. To sum up, hand made pottery has swayed from being totally ignored in studies about colonisation — scholars focused the identification of Phoenician diaspora solely on the basis of wheel made pottery — to become the centre of a rich discussion.[46] It has been usually understood as an indicator of either indigenous people or Phoenicians. In these terms, the discussion has lead into a dead end. Regarding the specific case of Lixus, in a first step, the discussion on the hand made pottery was focused on the problem of a hypothetical pre-Phoenician settlement in Lixus. Thus, hand made pottery — and more precisely incised pottery — is related to the presence of north African indigenous communities.[47] In fact, Bokbot and Onrubia-Pintado have suggested that an *indigenous pre-Phoenician* settlement in Lixus would have developed on the upper part of the hill, based on incised pottery that is recorded in initial levels.[48] But we know now that it is also recorded together with wheel made pottery.

Other scholars, on their side, have suggested that hand made vessels were commonly used by Phoenicians,[49] following earlier proposals by Schubart for the cooking pots from Morro de Mezquitilla.[50] In the Lixus case, these scholars have pointed out that similarities in hand made pottery between the western Phoenician settlements is at the basis for considering that it should not be related to indigenous people, but to a somewhat homogeneous Phoenician people in their colonial movements. The rest of the hand made pottery — even burnished tableware pottery — is interpreted as originating from the south of Spain although scholars are well aware that this is not a reliable reference for ethnicity and that "there are not any direct presence of indigenous people".[51] They also admit that only casseroles in coarse ware can be related to north Africa indigenous populations.[52]

From these perspectives, scholars have been mainly concerned with ethnicity in their approach to the problem of the Phoenician colonisation. Hence, the hand made pottery keeps swaying from being seen as indigenous, either from the south[53] or from

[46] Apart from the references cited above, see also Martín Ruiz 2000; and Delgado 2005.
[47] Bokbot and Onrubia-Pintado 1992 and 1995.
[48] Bokbot and Onrubia-Pintado 1992, p. 24.
[49] Belén, *et al.* 1996, p. 342.
[50] Schubart 1986, p. 78.
[51] Belén, *et al.* 2001, p. 94.
[52] Belén, *et al.* 1996.
[53] See Bokbot and Onrubia-Pintado 1992 and 1995.

the north of the Strait,[54] to being Phoenician. Justification for the last option is based on the fact that hand made potteries seem to be quite homogeneous from one area to another within the Strait.[55]

These approaches usually neglect the fact that commercial diasporas and colonial situations are usually lead by people from diverse backgrounds, and that they are by no means homogeneous in practices, aims and life styles. And secondly, they are also colonialist approaches that deny completely the fact that indigenous people actually moved within the Strait in ways other than a simple (and western-based notion) north-south direction. Although this situation can be explained by a lack of fieldwork in the Maghreb, we have to be conscious that archaeological research and discourses are embedded in western ideas of colonial expansion, which spread biased colonialist interpretations.[56]

A COLONIAL SOCIETY FROM A LOCAL PERSPECTIVE

Convergences and Divergences within the Strait

That way, our proposal sees that diverse communities with different backgrounds were involved in the foundational colonial society of Lixus. We prefer to move the discussion away from ethnicity, however, as the sole variable of the problem, to the social; or at least we prefer an approach, which includes status and social hierarchy among others variables to assess ethnicity.

From our point of view, those hand made potteries examined above betray that groups from diverse origins were well part of the colonial society, which has been usually only labelled Phoenician. The great interest that hand made pottery provides is that it offers relevant nuances for understanding groups and identities involved alongside the Phoenician trade diaspora within the Strait.[57] These identities might be understood in terms of gender, status, age and others. In the whole, we are integrating both the northern and southern shores of the Strait as the local scenario where diasporas, movements and practices have developed.

This idea takes up again Tarradell's label of Circle of the Strait.[58] This proposal, although somewhat reformulated since then — at that time Tarradell envisaged closer

[54] See on their side López Pardo and Suárez Padilla 2002; Álvarez and Gómez Bellard 2005, p. 177; Villada, *et al.* 2007, p. 132.

[55] Belén, *et al.* 2001, p. 88.

[56] Rowlands 1998; van Dommelen 1997; Gosden 2004.

[57] Let us just recall that the great amount of heterogeneous hand made pottery in foundational Lixus (40–60%) is likely to be found in other settlements of the southern coasts of the Strait. For instance, in levels dated to the seventh century BC in Ceuta 59 percent of vessels are hand made: Villada, *et al.* 2007, p. 131.

[58] Tarradell 1960. See also a historical review of the concept in López Pardo 2002, pp. 23–24.

links with the eastern Mediterranean than with the central Mediterranean — deals with a shared local identity and convergent socioeconomic processes within the Strait. Evidences that support an integrated area might be the similarities between open carinated bowls with incised decorations that have been found in settlements from both the Maghreb and Iberia.[59]

However, considering a common scale of analysis does not imply homogeneity for the communities involved in the Strait. In fact, heterogeneity of people and cultures is what we are actually facing in foundational Lixus. For instance, with rare exceptions, hand made pottery is not exactly the same in both shores of the Strait. Burnished bowls with thickened rims to the inside might be more related to the eastern coast of Andalusia rather than the western one.[60] Furthermore, pottery with *retícula bruñida*, characteristic from indigenous settlements from Huelva, Sevilla and Cádiz, is not common in north Africa.

Wheel made pottery reveals other subtle differences. Grey wheel made potteries from the initial levels are very common in the coastal settlements of Atlantic Andalusia and Portugal — especially Huelva and Cádiz, where there is plenty of deep hemispherical bowls — whereas in Lixus they are practically absent. And grey potteries are also scarce in the initial levels of the settlements of the Mediterranean coast, like Morro de Mezquitilla, Toscanos or Fonteta.[61]

People and Practices: Exploring Identities in the Colonial Settings

What these differences mean is that diverse groups were moving within the Strait, not only from north to south, and that they actually constituted the colonial society, or better still, the colonial societies. Obviously, differences in each area are likely to be recorded; so how this area was integrated into the Phoenician commercial diaspora will explain better the specific developments detected in the south of the Strait.

Studies since the early sixties of the twentieth century have shown that the commercial diaspora in the Iberian Peninsula was embedded in the wider context of indigenous developments from Late Bronze Age. Thus, trade diasporas must be understood as stimulating local socioeconomic features while at the same time, they integrated local systems into a major web of regional or inter-regional exchanges.[62] The concept of trade diaspora explains better the movements of Phoenicians across the Mediterranean during the eighth century BC rather than colonisation *tout court*.[63]

[59] Belén, *et al.* 1996, p. 342; Gómez Bellard and Habibi 2001, p. 80; Mansel 2000, p. 171.
[60] López Pardo and Suárez Padilla 2002, p. 122.
[61] Apart from the references cited above, see for Fonteta Sala 2007, p. 211.
[62] Aubet 2005, p. 118; Ruiz-Gálvez 2005, p. 252.
[63] Aubet 2001, p. 279.

Phoenician colonial systems were well integrated into *local* socioeconomic networks[64] and the case of Lixus was not an exception. In fact, the developments during Late Bronze Age — although very poorly known — show that some communities had participated in long-range exchange movements within an Atlantic scope. Regarding these connections, the Rosnoën sword,[65] found during dredging works in the port of Larache in the early twentieth century, is the clearest expression that cultural processes during Late Bronze Age were already embedded in wider contexts — namely of an Atlantic nature, integrating both north and south shores of the Atlantic Strait — as we have pointed out in other studies.[66]

Hence, analysing the Phoenician commercial diaspora in North Africa requires an examination of modes of consumption in particular contexts. This examination places the emphasis on the local, and understands changes in relation to internal, rather than external, developments. In fact, scholars concerned with the study of colonial situations have pointed out that the external dynamics are not always the most important structural element in contact situations of this kind.[67]

Adaptation to local structures had to be an important element for the foreign groups to cope with a new situation. Navigation, a practice that has been traditionally closely associated with Phoenicians, is a good example, for sailing the Mediterranean is quite unlike sailing the Atlantic due to the fact that currents and winds are different from one sea to another.[68] Avienus (*Ora Maritima* 375–89 and 402–13) provide citations in which the hazards of the journey and, above all, the difficulties in sailing the ocean, its swell and its monsters are frequent. Participation of local sailors — indeed people who were used to these situations and who had knowledge of these constraints — becomes extremely necessary. Hanno's sailing ventures provide us with a good example of this cooperation when Carthaginians had to take Lixite guides and interpreters with them.

Cooperation and contacts with local people was vital if newcomers and foreigners were to gain knowledge of resources as well, because ultimately, Mediterranean sailors had to get used to new landscapes. Thus, as pacts and agreements had to be common in order to achieve these goals, cultures, traditions, materials and practices from diverse origins are likely to have been present in colonial Lixus.

Indeed, we maintain that people with different cultural backgrounds are recorded in Lixus and they actually constitute the colonial society. From this outlook, hybrid pottery deserves closer attention because it embodies patterns of technological fusion that can be understood in terms of "the effect of the practice of mixed origins".[69] In

[64] Aubet 2006, p. 95.
[65] Ruiz-Gálvez 1998, p. 276; Quilliec, 2007.
[66] Aranegui 2001, p. 28.
[67] Stein 1999, pp. 24–43; Dietler 1998, p. 296; Gosden 2004, p. 17.
[68] Medas 2003, pp. 13–48.
[69] Friedman, quoted by van Dommelen 2006, p. 139; see also Vives-Ferrándiz, forthcoming, on these ideas applied to another case study from east Iberia.

postcolonial theory this is termed hybridisation, a word that entails the creation of new trans-cultural forms in colonial situations, new concepts of social spaces in which new emphases are at work.[70]

This evidence suggest the existence of processes of typological and, more importantly, technological convergence connecting the indigenous and Phoenician practices and traditions. In so far as technical systems are embedded in relationships and social processes, technology can be seen as a mediator between things and society.[71] Let us recall that hand made plates and bowls of wheel made typology, and hand made vessels with red slip are recorded. Consequently, they imply that both typologically and technologically, the hand-made methods of the native population and the wheel-made techniques of the Phoenicians seem to have converged. They also indicate that people with different backgrounds were all together in colonial Lixus. In other words, mixing processes took place throughout the area from the moment of the Phoenician arrival.

Pots, plates and bowls might have been actively transformed, as were other practices and social relations at the same time. In addition to these vessels, new practices were also figuring in the changes. Indigenous and foreign ways of cooking, eating and drinking became merged in new contexts. This is interesting because culinary practices tend to be extremely conservative, and they are evidence of firm cultural backgrounds.[72] Cooking vessels in Lixus are represented by hand-made pottery, whereas the tableware used is both hand made and wheel made.

Furthermore, ritual practices reveal interesting points of comparison. In Lixus wheel made oil bottles, lamps and incense burners are virtually absent in the initial levels, and moreover, this is striking when compared to their relatively high presence in settlements in the lower part of Guadalquivir valley. This pattern might be evidence of different ritual practices, which betray differences within the local networks.

The interpretation of these objects depends on the context of their discovery, which, unfortunately in this case, is limited to dump levels without more precise contextual information. Other evidences can be put forward, however, to gain insights into this society. Interestingly flint chips for sickles are also recorded in these layers, and they suggest two possibilities. First, harvesting and agricultural practices (no matter if they were traditional or not, as we still do not know for certain whether the iron sickles were used) were part of everyday life in the initial levels of Phoenician colonies. And second, that these practices coexist with evidence of advanced technologies, like wheel made pottery and complex building construction. Indeed, different cultural traits are actually found in the same contexts of the colonial society. In other words, transformations recorded are likely to be seen in terms of the merging of different practices, which is a feature that is characteristic of hybridisation processes.

[70] Bhabha 1994, p. 36; Young 2001, p. 348.
[71] Dietler and Herbich 1994, p. 205.
[72] Goody 1982.

These materials have participated actively in social relationships; more precisely they were clear expressions of values and norms, visions and ways of being in the colonial scenario. Beyond a dual ethnic divide, what we actually suggest is that groups of people from different backgrounds lived together in the same settlement. Of course, that does not mean that a homogenised society was there, but that different identities were actually represented in different ways. As yet, contexts do not provide much information to assess strategies of individual households or groups in greater depth. Their relationships and interactions, however, had to be determined by their social position and, in fact, hierarchies and inequalities are likely to be identified in further research.

OPEN INSIGHTS

Classical texts relate the foundation of Lixus by Phoenicians, but we all know that texts never tell the whole story. Material culture reveals other voices and narratives that should have had place in this situation. How do we assess these voices? Pottery might have its limitations, because pottery cannot be related to a single ethnic group of people. This is only one aspect of the colonial situation, which is rather simplistic. In fact, we should look for practices, embedded not only in pottery, but also in other materials like flint sickles.

Therefore, earlier discussions about a pre-Phoenician settlement in Lixus, which depended on the identification of hand made pottery, can be ruled out. This does not at all mean, however, that hand made pottery was not connected to indigenous know-how; it rather indicates that these multiple practical connections, either to indigenous or Phoenicians groups, were shaping the colonial society because they *were* the colonial society.

Indigenous and *Phoenician* are labels that refer to a point of view. We thus consider as a starting point for further research, the plurality of the Phoenician culture, or rather different ways of being Phoenician, and the plurality of indigenous people. Hence, what we identify as indigenous people moving within or settling into Lixus should be seen in terms of colonists also. Postcolonial critiques provide other insights on these situations, namely the assumption that the colonial society is better assessed in transversal terms and not in a simple dual divide. What actually matters are the perspectives from concrete social groups and then the expressions of identities provide a rather more subtle way of seeing this situation. Thus, competition and cooperation among households, or gender, age and status groups, or among seafarers, craftsmen, rulers, and so on, come up in the discourse if we look at practices they performed.

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